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11

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CHAPTER VII. A NEW PROFESSION.

READER, have you ever lived in lodgings? If so, you cannot fail to have observed that your landlady is in the enjoyment of all those Woman's Rights for which so many of her sisterhood are so vainly clamorous; that her domestic sway is supreme, and that her husband is very literally "nowhere." If you see him at all (which is unusual), it is always in a subordinate capacity; if you hear him address his wife—"answer" her in the sense that that "hussy" the servant-girl understands the phrase, he never does—it is in meek and deferential accents. Under the course of treatment to which he is subjected, he not seldom succumbs altogether, which is why so many landladies are widows; but if he lives, he plays second fiddle in the matrimonial duet. If, being yourself a lady, and interested in the triumphs of your sex, you inquire of his wife how this most desirable state of things has been brought about, she will plump down, uninvited, on the nearest chair, begin to rock herself to and fro, and presently burst into tears. "He'd need do all he could, ma'am," she explains, "and never cross me in anything while the breath is in him, for when I married him I was well-to-do in the world, and he has brought ruin upon me."

It may have been drink, or it may have been a passion for bagatelle, or even skittles (for some men are very low in their tastes); but he has spent her money, and surely the least he can do in reparation is to constitute himself her slave. In China the villain would probably have lost him-

self, after all else was gone, to some antagonist at cards or dice; but that being impossible in a civilised country, his services are his ruined wife's—"and very little use, Heaven knows, he is to me."

Now Lucullus Mansion was a glorified lodging-house, the very pink and perfection of one, but still a lodging-house—and what holds good of the least holds good of the lordliest, in such cases; its mistress, Mrs. Hodlin Barmby, had been ruined by the husband over whom she now reigned. This mischance had not been owing to bagatelle, nor yet to skittles. Mr. Hodlin Barmby was a gentleman by birth and taste, and had lost his wife's money where he had lost his own, years before, in a gentlemanly way, on Epsom Downs. He was the younger son of a baronet, and had had but four thousand pounds to lose, but such was his impulsive nature and so broad were his views, that he would have got rid with equal facility of forty thousand. The loss of his own patrimony affected him very little, but that of his wife's went to his heart. "My dear," said he, on the evening of that fatal Derby, "I have been a selfish scoundrel. You have only to endorse that statement and I'll blow out my—"

"Stop, Charles," cried his wife, imperatively (up to that hour she had been the mildest of women, and permitted him to have his own way in everything). "You have shown that there is nothing of that description to blow out; there is no use in crying over spilt milk, but henceforth permit me to manage matters. Will you do as I tell you; and let me hold our purse-strings in case there may be one day anything in it?"

"My dear," said he, with all the solemnity of which he was master, "with all my worldly goods—if I ever have any—I thee

endow. It is true I said that once before; but the obligations of the marriage service have a certain legal compulsion about them, like a tradesman's bill, which is offensive to a man of honour; this time you have my word as a gentleman. Henceforth I am entirely in your hands."

"Very good, Charles," rejoined his wife, who never gave him one word of reproach for having ruined her, except what was implied in that form of address; up to that time, she had always called him "Charley," but henceforth that playful diminutive was denied to him; the position she designed for him did not permit of it. "Very good, Charles; I feel confident you will never repent it. You are doubtless surprised at my receiving your bad news so coolly, but the fact is, the catastrophe is only what I expected would happen sooner or later, even at the moment when I accepted you."

"The deuce you did!" exclaimed her husband.

"Yes, Charles," she went on, "a woman is always a fool when she is in love; but she is not always unconscious of the fact. However, as I say, I knew you would come to smash, as you had done before, and I laid my plans for this emergency long ago. I don't say, mind, that they will recover the money you have lost to-day—but if they succeed as I expect they will do, they will enable us to live in comfort."

"That would be more than I deserve," said Mr. Hodlin Barmby, meekly.

"Listen, Charles. You are not a clever man, but you are very nice. Everybody likes you, and would do anything for you, if they could, short of dipping their hands into their pockets—"

"I shouldn't like them to do that," put in Mr. Barmby, reddening.

"You have nothing to do with it, sir," replied the lady, firmly. "Please to remember that it is I who am manager now. As it happens, however, we are agreed upon this point—I do not intend to be under obligations to anybody. Let us add up our assets. You have, on your side, social popularity and some judgment in wines and horses. I, on my part, understand how to keep house, to give really good dinners, and to set people at ease with one another. Now you, and many persons who have money to spare, have often told me that at the very best hotels—as they are at present managed—you get nothing fit to eat, and are half poisoned by the wines. The master and mistress, being themselves only fourth-

rate people, cannot of course be expected to know what persons of position are accustomed in their own houses, and are only bent on getting so much a head out of every meal."

"Good gracious!" ejaculated her husband, arranging his shirt-collar, "we are going to keep an inn. I see the sign before my eyes. The Pig and Periwinkle. Hodlin Barmby; licensed retailer of spirits."

"No, Charles, we are not. If you were a wiser man, we might indeed take the Star and Garter at Richmond, and make our fortune; but I anticipated your conventional objections to such a scheme. We must content ourselves with a fashionable boarding-house. You will superintend the wine department, look after the men-servants, and preside at the table d'hôte. As the son of a baronet—to which circumstance you must make constant allusion—you will attract the small deer in crowds; while our own friends will rally round us, at first for our own sake, and afterwards because they will find themselves ten times more comfortable at Lucullus Mansion than elsewhere. I fixed on the name six months ago, ever since you told me you had put the 'pot' on Lucullus, who, Lord George informed me, was named after a Roman gourmand. The house is that large hotel in which we stayed during our honeymoon at Balcombe, and which has been advertised for sale these three weeks. Of course we can't buy it, but I have no doubt I can make some arrangement for carrying it on for the next year or so."

"But where is the money to come from, my good woman?"

"The money, sir? Do you know how Rothschild made his money? Entirely by confining himself to his own affairs. Pray don't let me have to remind you for the third time of the change in our positions."

And thus it was that Mrs. Hodlin Barmby became the tenant of Lucullus Mansion. Some say an uncle of hers who had made his fortune in trade, and had looked very coldly on her in her days of prosperous dissipation, lent her the necessary money; others assert that she had always kept a few hundred pounds of her own against that "rainy day" which she had foreseen only too clearly; and one or two scandalous persons will have it that the required capital came from Lord George. To these last I give the lie direct. Mrs. Hodlin Barmby was as honest as she was pretty, and Lord George Despard was as poor as he was unprincipled—a comparison which to those

who know him implies that he had not a single penny. His "countenance," however, was invaluable to the new speculation, of which he good-naturedly appointed himself tout in ordinary; and he even brought Lady George herself—with whom he was not accustomed to travel—to shed a social lustre on the establishment in its first season. By this time, thanks to the tactics of its female manager, it was a very thriving concern, and most deservedly so. Living, indeed, was far from cheap at Lucullus Mansion, but on the other hand it was not only good, but excellent. The gravy soups did not remind you of beef-tea; the entrées were to be eaten, not passed untasted; the wines (even the port) were to be drunk. The house was always full during the two seasons of which Balcombe boasted, and which extended respectively from the beginning of November to the end of April—from the beginning of May to the end of October—and Mr. Hodlin Barmby was never without a ten-pound note in his pocket, to spend as he pleased. He kept his word to his wife; never disobeyed her; never interfered with her arrangements; and always "knew his place," which, when not at the head of his table d'hôte, was a very subordinate one. At the same time he was not without his uses. Disagreeable things will happen even in the best regulated households; gentlemen sometimes came to the mansion who fancied that their length of purse permitted them to find fault without occasion, and to take other unaccountable liberties. To these Mr. Barmby presented in person a printed card with the following inscription: "H. B. presents his compliments to —, and while thanking him for his past patronage begs respectfully to decline a continuance of it, after to-morrow at noon, at which hour Number—(the apartment of the offender) has been bespoken by a gentleman."

Mr. Hodlin Barmby was six feet two in his stockings, besides being, as we have already hinted, the son of a baronet, and this combination of physical and moral force never failed in its desired effect. If any lady misconducted herself, or (as happened once or twice) arrived as a privateer under the false colours of Respectability, Mrs. Hodlin Barmby needed no assistance to settle that little matter; she was five feet ten in her—well, in her evening shoes, and the co-heiress of a most respectable county clergyman who had made forty thousand pounds in mines; and if one of

these two female antagonists happened to be taken with hysterics, it was never Mrs. H. B., let me assure you.

And yet upon ordinary occasions nothing could be more agreeable and even winning than the excellent hostess of Lucullus Mansion. When she entered our heroine's apartment now, in answer to the latter's courteous "Pray come in," Evy thought she had never beheld a handsomer or more kindly-looking woman.

"Pardon this intrusion, Miss Carthew," said she, "but it is my duty, as your landlady, to ask whether you have all you want—you are dressed, I see. Else if I could have helped you, I should have been very glad. One never gets proper attention from one's own maid on the first day of one's arrival anywhere—or at least that used to be my experience, when I kept a maid."

Evy's own personal attendant had, in fact, been so occupied in getting her tea, and making her acquaintances below stairs, that she had neglected to visit her young mistress until she was far advanced with her toilet, and occupied as Evy was with her own tender thoughts, she had declined her services and dismissed her.

"I have got on very well, Mrs. Barmby, thank you," said Evy; "and find everything very nice, quite as nice as in one's own home, just as your old friend Mrs. Mellish told me I should do. By-the-bye, I have a note for you from her, which in the hurry of our arrival I forgot to give you down-stairs."

While Mrs. Barmby read it, Evy took stock of her, as women are wont to do of one another. How tastefully, yet quietly, she was dressed; and what a perfect lady she looked in that grey silk trimmed with black lace, an attire rather too matronly perhaps for so young a woman—she was not more than thirty-two at worst—but still that was a fault on the right side. She would grow too stout in time, doubtless, but at present her figure was splendid, and if all that beautiful hair was her own—and it really looked as if it was—she had more than Evy herself had, though being of a lighter brown, it made less show. What long lashes her eyes had, and—but, surely they were wet with tears!

Evy was not mistaken, there was something in that little note which had set Mrs. Barmby crying.

"It must seem very foolish, dear Miss Carthew," explained she, "for a person in my position to give way to sentiment, but

I have not seen Mary Mellish—she was Mary Newcombe then—for these fifteen years. We were great allies at school, and it was not likely that I should forget her of course; but I didn't expect her to remember me, or at all events to write so very kindly. Such things don't happen to me every day, I assure you. 'You must make a friend of her'—that's of you, Miss Carthew, Mary says, 'for my sake!' May I?"

"I am sure, Mrs. Barmby, I hope you will," said Evy, earnestly.

"Did Mrs. Mellish tell you about me—I mean about my little antecedents—my dear?"

"Yes," said Evy, blushing.

"Come, that's a comfort," exclaimed the other, simply. "I know it's very weak and foolish in me, but I do like ladies who come here to know something about who I was. Not that I was anything to boast of, but only that they shouldn't ask me, so very sharply at the outset, whether the beds are aired, and if there isn't some reduction in our charges in case they have their luncheons out. Of course you wouldn't have done it; my instinct told me that you were just what Mary describes you to be, and seeing you so young and winsome—just such a one, I thought, as the only child we ever had might have grown up to be, had she lived—I made bold to come and see you in your room, my dear."

"That was very kind of you," said Evy, "and, to tell the truth, I was rather alarmed at the prospect of going down to the table d'hôte, without knowing anybody there."

"You shall sit next to me, my dear, and your uncle shall be on the other side of you, if you please," said Mrs. Barmby, assuringly, "though I did intend it to be the other way, in which case you would have had Mr. De Coucy for your neighbour, a most charming old gentleman. He will probably propose to you in a day or two; but you must not mind that."

"But I think I shall mind it very much!" ejaculated Evy, with unfeigned alarm.

"Oh no, you won't, when you have seen a little of him. It's only a way he has with all young ladies; and when you have refused him—as of course you will do—it will not make a bit of difference in his pleasant talk (for he is a most agreeable man), and it will only amuse you the more

to see him laying siege to somebody else. He is a thorough gentleman at heart, besides being very well connected; he's first cousin to Lord Dirleton, who lives in your neighbourhood, by-the-bye, and whom you doubtless know."

"I have seen him," said Evy, conscious that she was growing very red; "but I cannot say I know him. Will there be many people at the table d'hôte to-day?"

"Well, my dear, about fifty." Mrs. Barmby took out a slip of paper, with a list of names very neatly written out, and referred to it. "Yes; there are fifty-three, which, unless somebody omits to come at the last moment—I hope it will be that Mr. Paragon—will make us a little lopsided. Come down as soon as the first bell rings, and you will find me waiting for you—and then you will not be flustered by the mob of people. And, lest I should forget it when the time comes, don't pass the kromeskies, nor the crème renversée, my dear, whatever you do, for they're perfection, though perhaps I ought not to say so." And with that farewell word of advice, and a reassuring smile, Mrs. Hollin Barmby sailed majestically out of the room, like a frigate parting from her convoy.

The idea of sitting next but one to Mr. De Coucy fluttered Evy not a little; not because he was likely to make her an offer of marriage, though that was a little embarrassing, but because his relationship to Lord Dirleton made him first cousin once removed to her own dear Jack. Everything else sank into insignificance before that tremendous fact. If she could only get him to talk of Jack, without his suspecting her tender interest in the topic, how very nice that would be; and yet, if she blushed as she had done just now, how could he help suspecting?

Here was another knock at the door, and in came Uncle Angelo with a pill-box in his hand.

"Do you think it would excite general observation, Evy," inquired he, "if I were to take one of these little pills between the courses?"

"Indeed, I do think it would, dear uncle," answered Evy, appealingly.

"Very good, my dear; then I suppose I must be content with my Vichy water, and the elixir after dinner, for nobody will know that from sherry unless by the smell."

Here the first dinner-bell sounded, and

Evy laid her small hand, which trembled not a little, on her uncle's arm, and descended to the *salle à manger*.

PLANETARY LIFE.

BY HERMES.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

OUR philosophy has however dreamed to some purpose, and the result of one of the dreams is a general belief, almost amounting to a conviction, that the planets are inhabited. Of the life in one of these planets the following papers give a fragmentary account. The things described are not creatures of the imagination, but actual realities of the Star City, and the narration is consequently to be looked upon as that of a traveller, who makes others acquainted with the remarkable objects he has seen in an unexplored country. Some of the manners and institutions of Montalluyah may suggest improvements in our own world; but they are not held up as models to be imitated. This assertion that the Star City is not a creation of fancy will, doubtless, be received with incredulity. Time, and time only, will prove its truth.

Indeed, the institutions of Montalluyah so completely harmonise with each other, that it would be difficult to adopt some of them to the exclusion of the rest, and I do not know a case to which I could more aptly apply Lord Bacon's maxim: "It is a secret both in nature and state that it is safer to change many things than one." The customs connected with the dinner table, for instance, which I describe in my first paper, could only be healthful in a climate where from early youth men have been thoroughly trained to habits of moderation. Here, as a rule, abstinence is easier than temperance, and we must, like Ulysses, be tied to the mast if we would resist the temptation of the siren's song. It is not so in Montalluyah, the Star City, where, as I have said in "Another World," all have been taught by their great lawgiver that intemperance destroys the power of enjoyment, and that like guests invited to a banquet, we ought neither to run riot nor to reject the good things offered to us in love.

NO. I. DINNER IN ANOTHER WORLD.

The citizens of Montalluyah, situated in the planet which may possibly be your so-called Mars, although they have attained a high degree of moral excellence, are by no

means ascetic in their habits, but constantly endeavour to obtain, from every source, the greatest amount of innocent entertainment. It would be not altogether wrong to call them sensual, if it were assumed that this word did not imply any sort of moral degradation, and that everything is made subservient to health and mental elevation.

Many of the particulars concerning the laws, manners, and customs of Montalluyah are now before the (terrestrial) public, but a description of the manner in which they dine on a grand scale, in the favoured city, has not yet been given.

Beginning with the background of the picture, let me attempt to convey some notion of our interiors. That we are able to utilise sunbeams for the production of colour has already been stated in "Another World." Of this power we avail ourselves in the decoration of our rooms, which are highly ornamented, the rays of the sun being concentrated so as to form part of the general design.

With us it is a leading principle to give our interiors such an appearance as to combine the comforts derived from walls and roofs, with a sense of freedom that belongs to a life in the open air. Thus we make our ceilings resemble a cloudless sky, with a clearness that, as far as the eye is concerned, more than approximates to reality. The only visible difference, between the artificial and the natural luminary, consists in the circumstance that the former does not dazzle the sight. In our palaces and principal houses every article of furniture is imitated from some attractive object, say, a picturesque rock, or a beautiful bird or flower, the greatest attention being paid to form and colour. Do not imagine from what I have just stated that we only appreciate a crude realism, and think that the only duty of art is to copy. In nature, with us as with you, many dark nooks and sharp angles are to be found, but not in our rooms. In the shape of these and of our doors, windows, furniture, and picture-frames, everything is circular, oval, or otherwise curvilinear. We like roundness and undulating lines, and look upon an angle as something to be avoided.

Our ears are sensitive as well as our eyes, and we are careful to prevent the recurrence of harsh sounds. The floors of our palaces are, indeed, of marble, and in the style which you would call "Mosaic," but our movable articles of furniture run upon casters covered with a material that,

while it facilitates movement, also renders it noiseless. The material is the hide of the hippopotamus, an animal which, as the readers of "Another World" are aware, we first regarded as our worst foe, and afterwards discovered to be of the utmost utility. When we use the hide as a covering for casters two layers are cemented together by the action of the sun, and are then gilded or bronzed, according to taste. Our doors and windows move on similar casters. When a knob is touched the door gradually glides sideways into the wall, in which there is a groove to receive it. If not checked by another pressure of the knob, the door, when it has reached its extreme point, will return to its place.

The windows, called by us "Zoolo Firmini" (firmament viewers) are as transparent as yours, when your panes are made of the finest plate-glass, but we do not use the same material. The hippopotamus, besides his principal hide, has several thin skins, and immediately below the thick outer hide lies the skin from which we make our panes, and which has this advantage, that it is not brittle. It is in itself diaphanous, but it does not attain the degree of transparency which we require without the application of electricity, and which, in the case of some hippopotami, is not attained at all. When the inner skin is of a coarser kind, we use it as you use "ground glass," and skins of a middling quality are found serviceable in ladies' boudoirs. The material, however, of whatever quality, is capable of receiving transparent colours, the beauty and brightness of which it heightens in an extraordinary manner, and we are great proficient in the art of producing painted windows. When our subjects are real we idealise far less than you; when they are ideal we idealise much more. Our pictures likewise differ from yours through an entire absence of black, so valuable in your pictures, the difference probably arising from the fact that our shades are red.

Let us now come to the dining-hall, called by us "Vuliole," that is to say, the "gratifier of appetite." This is a large circular room communicating with the hall of reception by means of two doors so skilfully contrived that, when they are closed, there is no indication of even their existence. Round the walls are panels of the most transparent kinds, nearly the height of the room, and somewhat less than three of your feet in width. Between every two of the panels stands a statue of some lady of Montalluyah remarkable for

talent, virtue, or beauty—statues of celebrated men being reserved for our galleries. Unpleasant subjects are avoided everywhere, except where the treatment of them is requisite for the ends of science, or for perpetuating some memorable incident. But even in these exceptional cases, the pictures and statues that do not make an agreeable impression are kept in establishments appropriated to this particular purpose. On the panels behind the statues are exquisite paintings, showing the condition of Montalluyah before and after the reforms took place which brought it to its present happy condition. In different parts of the hall are fountains springing from the midst of flowers of exquisite beauty.

The ceiling of the grand dining-hall in the palace of the Tootmanyoso—or supreme ruler—is concave, and painted so as to represent the sky studded with stars. These stars are connected with each other by links invisible to the naked eye, which communicate with a reservoir of electricity; and as soon as the fluid is brought into operation, they shine with a brilliant light, which is, however, softened by painted transparencies. The Tootmanyoso's seat is not higher than the others, but is distinguished from them by a star of exceptional brilliancy, which shines over the spot occupied by the monarch, being so arranged that it throws its converging light on his head, covering him, as it were, with an aureole of glory.

When a dinner-party is given in the royal palace, the guests at first assemble in a large oval hall, where they are received by the Tootmanyoso, seated on a dais. As they enter, their names are announced, according to sex, by one of two masters of the ceremonies, and the approach of each guest, accompanied by an officer appointed for that purpose, is preceded and accompanied by musical strains, generally conveying to the hearers an intimation of the talent, or other quality, by which the lady or gentleman is distinguished. I have stated elsewhere that with us music, as well as flowers, has a language of its own. I may now add that our instruments are, for the most part, different from yours, and are found serviceable in many details of ordinary life. A gentleman, when he is at a short distance from the dais, makes an inclination and falls on one knee. The duty of kneeling does not extend to the lady guests, and even the gentleman is assisted in the act of obeisance by a sloping rise of the part of the floor which is touched by his knee, and which is, more-

over, covered with padded cushions. After this preliminary the guests take their places on soft conches, placed in recesses at equal distances from each other.

When all are assembled the fact is announced by a short musical strain, and a little girl, selected for the elegance of her manner and the beauty of her voice, and educated for her particular office, enters the reception-hall in a dress covered with freshly-gathered flowers, the fragrance of which pervades the atmosphere. Presently, taking her place on a revolving pedestal, and standing in a statue-like attitude, she strikes a chord on an instrument somewhat similar to the lyre of the ancient Greeks. At this signal the hum of conversation ceases, and the little girl describes, in a pleasing song, the particulars of the coming feast—what you commonly call the menu, or bill of fare—the pedestal revolving all the time, that she may in turn face every one of the company.

When the song is ended, the inner doors of the reception-room are opened by an electrical knob, and the girl, descending from her pedestal, leads the way into the dining-hall. She is followed by the ladies, two and two, in a strictly defined order. Thus the first rank is given to age and talent, the second to beauty combined with virtue, and so forth. In "Another World" I have incidentally stated the fact that, with us, the dinner-table is circular, and that the guests are seated on the convex side only. Let me here add that it is fixed to the ground, and that this portion of the floor can be lowered entire to the offices beneath, and restored when wanted to its former place, which may, in the meanwhile, be occupied by another table.

Pursuing the order in which they entered the room, the ladies occupy alternate seats at the convex side of the table, to which, strange as it must appear to you at the first glance, their backs are turned. The gentlemen then enter, also according to a precedence regulated by a respect for moral and intellectual excellence, and each takes his seat next to the lady whom he prefers as a companion at the banquet. The attendants stand on the concave side of the table, and one of these, when all the guests are seated, touches a spring, which communicating with a piece of mechanism, causes each chair to describe a semicircle and bring towards the table the faces of their several occupants. Opposite the guests are mirrors made of the material above

described, which are fixed in the wall, where they are separated from each other by a narrow panel of exquisite workmanship. The ladies and gentlemen are thus reflected in various compartments, and can contemplate each other with mute admiration, without their glances being directly observed. Round the room at intervals above these mirrors are recesses occupied by musicians, who, concealed by a drapery of the finest golden tissue, accompany each course of the dinner with appropriate music; the little girl, who is so important in the reception-room, and who now reclines on a revolving couch, sometimes responding to them with her lyre.

Against the walls of the dining-room are suspended placards, which may be varied at pleasure, and which are inscribed with precepts enjoining temperance and decorum. While on the subject of decorum I may remark that, by us, a reference, during meals, to any painful or otherwise unpleasant subject would be considered a gross breach of etiquette. Some of your medical gentlemen might feel ill at ease at a dinner in Montalluyah.

To enter into the details of our cuisine would occupy too much space. The courses at one of our grand dinners are many and various, and we have no objection to animal food, but as we are firmly convinced that it is inexpedient to put too great a stress on the digestive powers, we reduce nearly all our viands to a pulp, that the stomach may be saved unnecessary labour. Even our fruits are scarcely ever eaten raw, but by a somewhat elaborate process their syrups are extracted and poured into moulds, each of which represents the fruit to which the particular syrup belongs. Whether our method of cooking could be beneficially adopted in the colder climates of your earth—and all your climates are colder than ours—I will not undertake to say. The extreme heat of our planet renders it necessary that animal food should be deprived as much as possible of its solidity, especially when prepared for the use of our higher, that is to say, our more intellectual classes. The abstinence from raw fruits is due to another consideration. In consequence of the heat these are commonly peopled with animalculæ of every description, some of which, if swallowed, would prove a fertile source of disease.

Passing from meat to drink, it is not too much to say that our favourite beverage is water, which with us is of a most pure and delicious quality, agreeable not only to the

taste but to the eye. Our other beverages, which consist principally of the fresh juices of fruit, prepared on the day on which they are drunk, are gently stimulating, and being unfermented, incapable of causing intoxication. Not that inebriety is beyond our reach. We not only understand fermenting, but have a plant, the very fragrance of which causes those who approach it to become somewhat intoxicated, and fills them with a desire to taste its berries. A few of these are sufficient to inebriate the strongest man, and so much havoc did they cause in former times, that the plant acquired the name of "Gusharla," or "cruel tempter." As the juice of the berries is useful for medicinal purposes, we do not destroy the plant altogether, but surround it with walls too high for even the most adventurous to climb.

Let me return to the dining-hall and its arrangements. The attendants, whose place is on the concave side of the table opposite to the guests, form a special class, having been instructed in their duties from early youth, as soon as the "character-divers" have ascertained their special qualities. They have generally been selected with a regard to elegance of form and manners, and they are attired in picturesque dresses of purple, blue, and scarlet, with a beautiful turban composed of similarly coloured tissues richly ornamented with precious stones. During the dinner they place upon the table the dishes, which, unseen by the guests, rise invisibly from the offices below. The sole charge of one little boy is to watch the occasions that arise for a change of napkins, which is effected by an ingenious mechanical contrivance. In front of the attendants, when these are not immediately engaged in the service of the table, passes a train of handsome children, each armed with a musical instrument smaller than your guitar, which it otherwise resembles. As a dish rises from below, one of these children proclaims its contents, not by words, but by an appropriate musical strain. The appearance of birds, for instance, is announced by a chirping sound, that of other meats, by an imitation of the lowings of the herd. Even fish, proverbially mute, rise to strains resembling the sounds peculiar to the waters in which they have been caught, the produce of the river being widely distinguished from that of the sea. Some of my readers may, I fear, think this practice ridiculous, so I should add, that our imitations of natural sounds are highly idealised, and by no means copies.

Our dinner-table, when laid out, presents a very gay appearance, every expedient having been adopted to produce a picturesque effect. On the cloth are painted, at equal intervals, large rings of purple and gold, to mark the place for every plate, which is thus surrounded by a beautiful ring. Ovals, one in front of each ring, are likewise painted, that the cases containing the knife, fork, and spoon may be similarly framed. These useful articles, which differ from yours, are among the chief ornaments of the feast. The handles and cases are mostly of gold, inlaid with precious stones, and are highly ornamented, especially when they are for the use of ladies, who regard them as a valuable portion of their jewellery. When dinners are given at private houses, each guest is expected to bring his own knife-case, which, if he is a married man, is always the property of the lady, but the custom does not extend to the banquets given by the Tootmanyoso. Another important ornament of our tables are our goblets, each being provided with a spout, or tube, which is placed in the mouth, so that neither the lips nor teeth are wetted while an act of suction is performed. I am told that the principle of these goblets is recognised by the Anglo-Americans, and that with them the tube is simply a straw. It is a rule with us that the colours of the goblets should be at once varied and harmonious, and by an artistical distribution of the glasses among a series of guests, an effect is produced by the entire combination equal to that of the most beautiful rainbow.

I should not forget to state that at the side of every cover is a fan, elegantly formed, and made of material so slight, that a person, merely by speaking, sets it in motion, when it diffuses a delicious fragrance around. In form and colour these fans commonly resemble our most beautiful birds and butterflies, the motion of whose wings they imitate, and care is taken that all differ from each other. Our grand rule for the production of beauty is the combination of the most perfect harmony with the greatest possible variety.

When the dinner, strictly so called, is at an end, the table is removed as if by enchantment, and is replaced by another covered with cool and refreshing fruits prepared in a peculiar way, in dishes that have the appearance of ice. There is, however, an interval between the removal of the first table and the rise of the second, and during this a number of little boys and girls march

in procession, each carrying, by a long handle, a basket of exquisite workmanship, filled with fragrant flowers and fruit-blossoms, which, when waved, spread a delicious odour. During the procession the children sing a hymn of thanks in harmony with the perfume. It will be understood that the special musical performances in the body of the hall are entirely independent of those of the instrumentalists in the galleries, who are silent when they take place.

The procession ended, the amusements of the evening begin. The centre of the room opens and a circular platform rises, upon which is stationed a group of female dancers. They wear dresses of a peculiar gauze, and in the course of their performance, which is distinguished by grace and elegance, they produce combinations, imitating beautiful objects in nature, such, for instance, as a rose, or a bouquet containing all the flowers of spring. The ornaments with which their dresses are decorated are chosen with regard to the proposed effects.

When the dance, which lasts about twenty minutes, is over, the most accomplished lady harpist, having volunteered to entertain the company, is led to a picturesque seat, frequently made in the semblance of a bird, and delights all ears with the strains of her instrument. When I say that the performance is voluntary, I mean the word to be taken in the strictest sense. While with you "pressing," as it is called, is an act of politeness, with us it would be a breach of etiquette even to ask a guest to play or sing. It should be observed that none of the guests offer to entertain the rest, unless their skill in musical art has already been formally recognised.

After the lapse of a certain time, the principal lady gives the order, and a musical drum is struck, which resounds through every part of the room. Here-upon the attendants press an electric button; large doors, hitherto invisible, fly open. Before dinner, it will be recollected, each gentleman had the privilege of selecting his neighbour. The right of selection is now on the side of the ladies, each of whom having chosen a partner, the whole company proceed, accompanied by sweet music, to a large hall, magnificently arranged with ottomans, reclining couches, and all things conducive to luxury and ease.

When seated, the ladies are waited on by boys, whose singularly ruddy complexion distinguishes them from the other inhabi-

tants of Montalluyah. They are generally natives of certain mountain districts, and they are employed in this menial capacity simply because, with rare exceptions, they are found unfitted for intellectual acquirements. Among us, distinction in rank is regulated exclusively by moral and intellectual worth. During the evening, following a royal dinner, these boys hand round to the ladies a salver, divided into as many as twenty compartments, which contains various fragrant spices, and revolves on a pivot, that each lady may, without effort, make choice of the odour she prefers.

Some of my readers will perhaps think that a banquet is hardly complete unless it results in a cigar or a meerschaum; but even here, though we never smoke tobacco which is much stronger than yours, we are not behind the terrestrials. We smoke after a fashion peculiar to ourselves, in the presence of the ladies, each of whom, during the evening, is expected to contribute to the comfort of the gentleman whom she has chosen for a partner. Sometimes she will offer him a small cup, which will be found to contain an "inhaling case," accompanied by an assortment of the most fragrant spices. The fumes of the spices are drawn up by means of the case or pipe, and seldom exhaled. Our "inhaling cases" are very valuable, those belonging to the Tootmanyoso and the upper classes being set with precious stones.

Thus commonly ends a dinner in Montalluyah. At particular seasons, however, the company retire into flower gardens, which are very spacious. Here, amidst the warbling of birds, and an atmosphere impregnated with fragrant odours, and beneath our glorious sky, they have recourse to various amusements, a description of which I reserve for another occasion.

CRIMINAL PHOTOGRAPHY.

WE have not yet come to an end of the additions made to the useful applications of photography. Nay, we seem to be still only on the threshold. Portraits—somewhat unmeaningly called cartes de visite—small enough to be inserted in an album, continue to be the main production of the art; but the variety in other directions is becoming amazingly large. Landscape, sea, and sky have been brought within the range of the camera, with surprising results; geological stratification and mineral structure are copied with a fidelity never before possible;

leaves, buds, tendrils, bark, and roots have been made to tell their secrets to the colodionised plate; wings, fur, plumage, skin, hair, are in like manner revealed as to their surface structure. Medical men take photographs of diseased organs and tissues, as among the best modes of comparing one disease with another. Archæologists photograph ancient marbles and inscriptions, ancient bronzes and coins. Ethnologists fix by a similar agency the characteristic portraiture of nations and tribes. Astronomers, by the aid of the camera, have largely increased the knowledge which the telescope and the spectroscope had given them of the sun, moon, and other heavenly bodies; and are preparing to use the same valuable auxiliary in watching the transit of Venus next year. Civil engineers take photographs of broken bridges and embankments, and mechanical engineers of broken boilers and locomotives, that they may have before them a permanent record of each disaster, so far as concerns the actual appearance of the fragments. And now justice steps in to claim her share in the service which photography renders to mankind. She asserts that when a rogue has become well-nigh incorrigible, it is right that the officers of the law should have an eye upon him, and a clue whereby they may know him again when he again transgresses.

During a few years past, a custom has occasionally been adopted of taking photographs of criminals in prison—not, of course, to gratify the criminals themselves, but to obtain permanent means of knowing them again. This was generally decided on by individual magistrates, or jail-governors, who foresaw the value of the system; and evidence has been afforded that they were not wrong in anticipating useful results. In one instance, two men stole some sheep in the north of England, drove them south, and added to the number as they went on. They sold them in London, and got off with the proceeds; but the detectives ferreted them out, and lodged them in Shrewsbury Jail. As a means of obtaining evidence, the police required that the thieves should be identified in the districts through which they had passed. A photographer took their likenesses; copies of these were sent to the several districts; and the clue thus obtained led to the conviction of the offenders. In another instance, where a murder had been committed at Durham, a photograph of a suspected man was sent by the police to the

house of one John Owen, a tailor, in a distant part of England. It was immediately recognised by Owen's daughters, one of whom exclaimed in tears, "Oh, it's our Jack; there is no doubt about it now;" and Owen himself also acknowledged that the photograph was a portrait of his son, against whom suspicion had already been aroused, and who proved to be the murderer.

When it was proposed, about three years ago, to establish this as a regular system, objections were raised to it by some portion of the press. It was urged that there are generally seven or eight thousand convicts in the various convict prisons, besides prisoners in other jails; that to take and keep photographs of them all would produce a criminal album of most portentous bulk; that it would be unfair to photograph a man against his will, and thus render him an object of suspicion for the rest of his life; and that an ingenious rogue might so effectually distort his features, as to render identification difficult, if not impossible. And it was added: "Of what use will the photographs be? Criminal faces are almost all of one type. There is but little individuality about them; and the various photographic portraits, which will compose the new criminal gallery, will have so unusually strong a family likeness as to be of little or no practical value in establishing the identity of a prisoner." These objections were without difficulty removed. As to the number of photographs, this might be lessened to any degree if the results were not found adequate to the expense. As to the unfairness of photographing a man without his own consent, this objection falls to the ground; the photographs are for the police authorities, not for the public; and they are portraits of wrong-doers, concerning whose future proceedings society has a right to be placed on its guard. And as to the family likeness among rogues, every day's experience disproves this; some of the most benevolent-looking hypocrites are to be found among our criminals.

There is more cogency in the objection that a criminal might so twist about his face as to render a photograph wanting in real identity. The authorities have experienced this, and have adopted means for frustrating the cunning. On one occasion, at Shrewsbury, where a convict knew that he was to be photographed, he made such horrible contortions as to spoil the plate, and then a second. At a third attempt,

the photographer only pretended to be at work; he had either no lens in his camera, or no collodionised plate behind the lens. After a few moments, he shut down the apparatus with an expression of annoyance, and went into the dark chamber as if to develop a negative. The convict, thrown off his guard, resumed his ordinary shape of features; and at that moment a second photographer, quietly placed behind a screen, did the work effectually through a small opening. In other instances, by previous concert with the prison warders, the photographs have been taken in the labour-yard, at the instant when a prisoner was standing before a small opening in the wall. In most cases, however, a threat of shortening the rations, or increasing the labour, has been effectual in inducing the rogues to leave their features in their natural form.

Three years ago, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in the exercise of power intrusted to him by parliament, issued an order to the magistrates to furnish the Commissioners of Police with photographs of all offenders in county prisons, whose offences brought them within the statutory meaning of the Habitual Criminals' Act; thereby giving systematic effect to a plan which had before been only partially adopted. The Chief Commissioner of Police, reporting on the subject about a year afterwards, stated that the order had not been so well carried out as had been expected, but that the full benefit of the system might eventually be looked for. "It is confidently expected that a more general use of photography, the exercise of greater care in observing and noting any peculiarities in the personal appearance of prisoners respecting whose antecedents information is sought, and the cordial co-operation of the police and prison authorities of the kingdom with the Central Register Office, will lead to the frequent identification of old offenders. Many prisoners have been identified by means of their photographs, and former convictions proved. Occasional use has been made of photography in special cases with good results; and the system recently established of visiting prisons has given the detective officers a good knowledge of thieves."

Two years ago a new Act was passed to give more definite effect to the Home Secretary's order. Registers of convictions are to be kept in a prescribed form at central offices in London, Edinburgh,

and Dublin. The governor, or chief officer of every jail, is to make returns of the persons convicted of crime who come into his custody. Regulations are to be made for photographing all prisoners convicted of crime, confined in any prisons; and refusal to obey any regulation made in this matter is to be deemed an offence against prison discipline. The expenses of keeping the register are to be paid by the Treasury; but the outlay for photographing the convicts is to be deemed a part of the regular expenses of each prison or jail.

An interesting parliamentary paper has recently been issued, giving an account of the results of this system, during the short time that it has been in force in a regular way. Down to the end of last year, more than thirty thousand photographs of criminals had been received by the Commissioners of Metropolitan Police, and deposited in the Habitual Criminals' Office, from the governors of county and borough jails and convict prisons. This was in little more than twelve months. Going back another year, to the date when the Home Secretary's order was issued, the total number amounted to forty-three thousand, forwarded from a hundred and two prisons in England, and thirteen in Wales (the experiences of Scotland and Ireland are not reported in this document). As we know pretty well the cost of photographic album portraits done in the usual way, we may have a pardonable curiosity to learn the cost of those relating to criminals. This information the parliamentary paper gives us; for it appears that the forty-three thousand prison photographs have cost three thousand pounds—about one shilling and fourpence each. The rogues are certainly not worthy of this sixteenpence apiece; but then it is bestowed, not for their benefit, but as a safeguard in the hands of justice.

The House of Commons, in ordering the returns to which the paper relates, requested to be informed in how many cases the photographs had led to the identification and conviction of offenders. Many of the governors of county and borough prisons were unable to furnish information on this point. Some said "not known," some "no record kept," some "not recorded," some "cannot ascertain," many of them plainly said "none," while the rest furnished instances of successful application. The Bedford County Prison reported: "Of the hundred and five county prisoners, twenty have been detected through the aid

of photography." Cornwall said: "In many cases information received from the Habitual Criminals' Register—by photographs sent on jail forms for recognition—has led to the identification of old offenders." Dorset could tell of "six cases known;" while Herefordshire reported that "three who have been in custody here were recognised by the police elsewhere through their photographs." The authorities at the Holloway City Prison had no means of knowing accurately the number of cases in which photographs had led to the identification and detection of criminals; but, "at any rate, they can say that about thirty of the number have since come under their observation, and have been re-dealt with for fresh offences, in most instances receiving a sentence of penal servitude." At Leicester Borough Prison three male prisoners had been detected, before trial, by means of portraits sent round to different counties, of having been previously convicted of felony. At Newgate many prisoners had been identified by means of photographs received from the government convict prisons.

Some of the prisons sent memoranda of the cost that had been incurred in bringing the photographing arrangements into working order. Monmouthshire told of twenty-five pounds spent upon a studio; while at the Liverpool Borough Prison an expense of ninety-five pounds had been incurred for a photographing room, and sixty pounds per annum for the services of a photographer. Here and there the governor of the prison is a tolerably efficient amateur in this art, and has managed the matter without any cost to the county or borough. So far as we can judge from the returns, only one copy of each photograph is usually taken, but in some instances there are evidently more. Thus, of two hundred and twenty-eight photographs sent to the Habitual Criminals' Office from Leicester, twenty-two were duplicate copies. Of five hundred and eighty-two taken at the City Prison, Holloway, two hundred and twenty-four were furnished to the Registry, three hundred and twenty-eight to the City police, and thirty to the magistrate. In all probability there were several triplicates in this instance. The greatest number sent by any one prison to the Criminal Registry were from Newgate, nearly four thousand eight hundred; next to this was Coldbath Fields Prison, about two thousand eight hundred; Liverpool Borough Prison came next, with two thousand

eight hundred; and Westminster County Prison, with two thousand three hundred. From these high numbers we come down to Lincoln County Prison, which sent just one photograph, and only one, for which an outlay of three shillings and sixpence is recorded. It might be supposed that Newgate, with its large brigade of photographs transmitted to Scotland Yard, would be able to point to a goodly number of instances in which these have led to the detection of criminals; but there is one reason why the authorities at Newgate have no means of testing this matter: "The prisoners convicted here are, after trial, removed to various prisons to undergo their respective sentences;" and Newgate sees nothing more of them unless a subsequent conviction, for other crimes, happens to take place within the district of which this prison is the head-quarters.

It is not alone in this country that photography has been brought into requisition as an aid to the administration of justice, nor, indeed, was it with us that the system first began. Every principal police station in the United States of America has for some years past had its "Rogues' Gallery"—a collection of portraits of offenders whose future proceedings require watching, and whose personal identity might clear up some otherwise insoluble puzzlement. It may perchance be only a joke, but the American thieves are said, in self-defence, to have established a "Detectives' Gallery," portraits of such police officers as it might be worth while to avoid. Cunning rogues are more likely, we imagine, to photograph such lineaments on their brains or memories than on collodionised plates of glass.

A DESERTER.

I HAD breathed of the battle, turned face to the foe,

Seen men fight, seen men fall;

In the heat of the struggle I'd striven, and lo!

I had come through it all!

With the sweat on my forehead, the blood on my blade,

I had gained me such ground

As gave place just to pause at, ere yet I essayed

For a crown 'mid the crowned.

A mere lull in my life—for before me, behind,

Surged the hoarse waves of war,

And around me the storm raged, insatiate, blind,

As it strained to the shore.

Though something were won me, though something were passed

On the road to the goal,

Much remained to be mastered, ere, victor at last,

Were achieved a man's whole!

So, faint with long striving, I halted, took breath,

Thought of deeds still undone,

And my heart to my heart said, "Or glory or death

There is yet to be won!

Just a moment to rest and recruit, then again
To the thick o' the fight;
Mix with men there, and feel a man's passion, man's
pain,
Man's fierce pulse of delight!"

Was there aught that could stay me, the while through
each vein
So giddily glad
Thrilled the hot tide of action, and heart, too, and
brain,
But one impulse had?
Was there aught that could turn me aside, bid me yield
Up my share in the fray,
And, the laurels of life unattained, quit the field
Ere the close of the day?

Ah, weak and unworthy! Lost, lost is the prize;
A man more unmanned
By the tongue of a woman, her lips, and her eyes.
And the touch of her hand!
Far off the great struggle for fame still goes on,
Though it fades from the sense;
Say! for purpose abandoned, for glory foregone,
Will Love recompense?

OUR FORMER WARS WITH THE ASHANTEES.

THE FIRST WAR CONCLUDED, AND THE SECOND.

THE embassy to the King of Ashantee mentioned in a previous article led to a treaty, the king writing a very characteristic letter to the English Governor of the Gold Coast, an abridgment of which we append, as it suggests many reflections applicable to our present difficulties.

"Sai Tootoo Quamina, King of Ashantee and its dependencies, to John Hope Smith, Esquire, Governor-in-Chief of the British Settlements on the Gold Coast of Africa.

"The king sends his compliments to the governor, he thanks the King of England and him very much for the presents sent to him, he thinks them very handsome. The king's sisters and all his friends have seen them, and thank him. The king thanks his God and his fetish that he made the governor send the white men's faces for him to see, like he does now; he likes the English very much, and the governor all the same as his brother.

"The King of England has made war against all the other white people a long time, and killed all the people all about, and taken all the towns, French, Dutch, and Danish, all the towns all about. The King of Ashantee has made war against all the people of the water-side, and all the black men all about, and taken all their towns."

After that the king sent word to the Governor of Cape Coast and the Governor of Annamaboe.

"Well! you know I have killed all the Fantees, and I must have Adocoo's and Amooncy's books, and I can make friends

with you, good brother and good heart; but now they send four ackies, that is what makes the king's heart break out when he looks on the book and thinks of four ackies, and his captains swear that the Fantees are rogues, and want to cheat him. When the white men see the Fantees do this, and the English officers bring him this four ackies, it makes him get up very angry, but he has no palaver with white men.

"All Fantee is his, all the black man's country is his; he hears that white men bring all the things that come here. He wonders that they do not fight with the Fantees, for he knows they cheat them. Now he sees white men, and he thanks God and his fetish for it.

"When the English made Appollonia Fort, he fought with the Aowins, the masters of that country, and killed them; then he said to the caboceer, 'I have killed all your people, your book is mine.' The caboceer said, 'True! so long as you take my town, the book belongs to you.' . . . This king, Sai, is young on the stool, but he keeps always in his head what old men say, for it is good, and his great men and linguists tell it him every morning. The King of England makes three great men, and sends one to Cape Coast, one to Annamaboe, and one to Accra. Cape Coast is the same as England. The king gets two ounces from Accra every moon, and the English wish to give him only four ackies for the big fort at Cape Coast, and the same for Annamaboe. Do white men think this proper?

"When the king killed the Dankara caboceer, and got two ounces from Elmina, the Dutch governor said, this is a proper king, we shall not play with him, and made the book four ounces. The king has killed all the people, and all the forts are his. He sent his captains to see white men, now he sees them, and thanks God and his fetish. If the path was good when the captains went, the king would have gone under the forts and seen all the white men. The Ashantees take good gold to Cape Coast, but the Fantees mix it; he sent some of his captains like slaves to see, and they saw it. Ten handkerchiefs are cut to eight, water is put to rum, and charcoal to powder, even for the king. They cheat him, but he thinks the white men give all those things proper to the Fantees.

"The king knows the King of England is his good friend, for he has sent him handsome dashes (presents). He knows his officers are his good friends, for they come

to see him. The king wishes the governor to send to Elmina to see what is paid him there, and to write the King of England how much, as the English say their nation passes the Dutch. He will see by the books given him by both forts. If the King of England does not like that, he may send him himself what he pleases, and then Sai can take it.

"He thanks the king and governor for sending four white men to see him. The old king wished to see some of them, but the Fantees stop it. He is but a young man and sees them, and so again he thanks God and his fetish."

Our second war with this savage nation was much more prolonged, and far more disastrous than the first. Our attack was begun rashly, and with a foolish contempt for the enemy, and ended in defeat and ruin, from the evil effects of which we are still suffering, and probably shall still further suffer. The story is short but sad. In January, 1824, Sir Charles M'Carthy, having declared war on the Ashantees, determined to make a foray into the enemy's country, and strike terror among them by a rapid and sure blow. Accordingly he divided his small army with Major Chisholm, and taking with him only one thousand men and ten officers, pushed forward into the interior. He soon found himself in front of about ten thousand savages. The battle commenced across a small river, about thirty feet wide, at two P.M. on January the 21st. The firing was tremendous on both sides from two P.M. till six; up to that hour no Ashantee had dared to cross the river; but now, to our general's horror, the ammunition fell short, owing to the neglect of some officer whose duty it was to bring it to the front. Our force was small, and the only chance for our men lay in an incessant galling fire at the great host of infuriated enemies howling before them.

To the dismay of Major Ricketts, when he went to open the three last kegs supposed to be filled with ball cartridge, he found—can our readers guess?—only macaroni; although the very next day the Ashantees found in our camp, which they plundered, ten barrels of ammunition. The Ashantees then crossed the river in great numbers. The Fantees in our service never would carry bayonets, but the regulars and militia used their weapons with deadly effect, every one of them bayoneting three or four Ashantees, then snatching the bayonets from the muskets, they

sprang into the thick of the enemy's force, stabbing right and left, and falling at last like heroes. Sir Charles and his staff, on commencing to retreat, were attacked by about two thousand Ashantees, who had been sent round to intercept them. Mr. Williams, the Colonial Secretary, thus describes the death of Sir Charles M'Carthy:

"It was my fortune to be near our lamented chief when he received a wound in the breast by a musket-ball, I believe mortal. Buckle, Wetherell, and myself, conveyed him under shelter of the nearest tree, and there sat to await that fate which appeared inevitable. We had not remained long before we were discovered by the enemy, who immediately rushed on us with their knives. In the struggle, I received a desperate cut on the left side of my neck, and before the stroke could be repeated, a man, who appeared to be of authority among them, fortunately passed, and ordered my executioner to desist, which was immediately complied with. On my being released from their grasp, and turning round, I was horror-struck at seeing my three companions lying headless corpses at my feet. I was now bound as a prisoner, and conveyed towards their camp."

After Mr. Williams was taken prisoner, the Ashantees cut his clothes from his body with their knives, wounding him at every slash. They then placed before him in a row the heads of all the English officers. He was kept for five weeks without clothes, and compelled to sleep in the open air. The jaw-bones of the dead were all removed by the Ashantees, according to their barbarous custom with their enemies. Only two of our officers escaped, and they were both wounded. One English officer, after being shot through both knees, killed two of the enemy with his sword, then, seeing a party of Ashantees running up to cut off his head, he shot himself in the heart. We lost altogether a general, nine officers, one hundred and seventy-nine privates, while ninety men were wounded.

After this terrible defeat at Sicondee (or Assamakou), Mr. Fraser retreated, with the Fantee contingent, across the country to reinforce Major Chisholm, but hearing that he also had been cut to pieces, he fell back to garrison Cape Coast Castle, where an attack was hourly expected.

Many of the dispersed troops followed Captain Ricketts into the thickest part of the woods, led by a Wassaw man, who

enabled them to evade parties of the enemy.

On the 24th the fugitives fell in with Major Chisholm, who had been unable to obey Sir Charles's orders to join him, having had to cross the river Boosom-pra, five miles from Ampensasoo, in a single canoe.

Two other detachments of our forces in this miserably conducted war were scattered over the country, useless apart, when they might have been formidable together. At Yancoomassie, Captain Laing, with the Fantees, was threatening the Asson country. A fourth division of the Royal African Colonial Corps, under Captain Blenkarne, had been sent to Akine to draw the enemy from Western Wassaw. The natives of a village near Sicondee, having fired on our boats and disarmed our fugitives, a force of twelve hundred men was sent to burn the place, which they did, driving out the inhabitants, and four hundred of the Ashantee garrison. The Ashantees remained inactive all February, while Major Chisholm put Cape Coast Castle in a state of defence, and prepared to dispute the passage of the Boosom-pra with the enemy. In March the Ashantees pushed forward, and took up a strong position at Fettue, ten or twelve miles from Cape Coast Castle. On May the 20th Colonel Sutherland, who had taken the command, hearing that the Ashantees were expecting a reinforcement of ten thousand men, resolved on a sudden attack, ordering every able-bodied man into the field, but leaving the sailors and marines of the squadron to garrison the forts.

Major Chisholm now, by dint of hard work and fatigue, cut paths to the enemy's position in the forest, and attacked them on March the 2nd, an hour after noon, a rather trying time for a battle in Africa, even in a wood. The Ashantees fought manfully from behind covert, keeping up a heavy and incessant fire from the bush, where they could only be seen at intervals, and making several skilful attempts to turn the major's flanks. After five hours' fighting, however, finding themselves baffled and repulsed on all points, they retired, with great loss in killed and wounded. Now was the time for the advance, which might have led to a crowning victory; but our Fantee allies, who had had quite enough of the Ashantees at close quarters, and liked them still less when at bay, quietly but firmly refused to move a step, except backward, and about half of them fled altogether. Major Chisholm, thus deserted at

the critical moment, was compelled to retire, and two days after the Ashantees returned to the ground from whence we had driven them. In this bush fighting we lost eight English and eighty-four natives, while seventy-five English, and six hundred and three Fantees were wounded; eighty-eight English were also returned as missing.

During these hostilities the august King Assai Tootoo Quamina, who considered us still his tributaries, as we once really had been, died at Coomassie, and his brother and successor, Adoo Assai, mustered all his warriors, with the determination that he would raze Cape Coast Castle to the ground, and drive all the white men into the ocean.

After about three weeks' lull, the king advanced to within five miles of the fort, and established his head-quarters at Garden Hill village, spreading a great chain of posts round the settlement, in bush so thick that his strength could only be guessed at by the length of the line and the smoke of the camp fires. On the 23rd the Ashantees drew nearer, and were seen in force from the Hill Tower, and signals were at once passed to the town. The townsmen snatched up their arms, while the women, children, provisions, and valuables were taken into the fort, the seamen and marines were landed from the Victor (a man-of-war in the harbour), and the crews of the merchant ships lying in the roads were sent on board to man the guns.

Colonel Sutherland had long before given strict orders to pull down some houses, within thirty yards of the fort, which commanded the land-side ramparts, but the order had been neglected. There was no time now to pull the houses down, so four of them were set on fire, and unfortunately the wind rose, the flames spread, and about half the town was either consumed or unroofed. During the night the Ashantees occupied Parson's Croom, a village within a mile of the fort, but still delayed the attack. Till the end of the month, indeed, they spent their time in detaching strong parties to lay waste the adjoining country, and burn the villages.

The Cape Coast garrison amounted only to three hundred and sixteen rank and file, chiefly young soldiers, recruits, and boys; of these one hundred and four were in hospital, and twelve sick in quarters. On July the 4th, however, the Thetis arrived from England with a few troops, and on the 6th a body of auxiliaries came from

Accra. The Ashantees, hearing of our reinforcements, called in their foraging parties, and on the 7th were seen defiling over a hill towards their king's tent, on the left of their position. On the 8th, our Accra auxiliaries, who had been supplied with arms and ammunition, were sent with the Cape Coast people to occupy a chain of heights opposite the enemy, covering the town and forts. They spent till the 11th in clearing the forest, fortifying their posts, and skirmishing with the advanced parties of the enemy, who were busy in cutting paths towards our lines.

On the 11th, soon after daybreak, the Ashantees descended in heavy masses, and formed their line across the valley leading to the right of our position, which was about half a mile from the town. About two P.M. they were fired upon by our skirmishers, and a general fight ensued, which terminated at dusk by the Ashantees being driven back, and worsted at all points. Two of their camps, which they weakened to reinforce the left, were burnt and plundered by the Cape Coast men, who, although they had daily to be driven to the front at the point of our bayonets, fought on this occasion with steady courage for four hours. The Ashantees struggled gallantly all day, and made several clever but ineffectual attempts to turn our right wing.

Colonel Sutherland's force on this occasion consisted of one hundred and ninety-three men and fifteen officers of the Royal African Colonial Corps, ninety men and one officer of the Second West India Regiment, three Royal Marine gunners, one hundred and twenty militia, and four thousand six hundred and fifty of our native allies. Of the English regulars two men were killed, and eight wounded, while the Fantees had one hundred and two killed, and four hundred and forty wounded. The Ashantees numbered sixteen thousand men, and left numbers of dead, including many chiefs, upon the field of battle.

On the 12th the Ashantees drew up in the valley, as if again resolved to try their fortune. To test their temper Colonel Sutherland sent out a body of skirmishers, who opened fire, and then retired through the bush. The enemy replied hotly for half an hour after the skirmishers had returned, and then withdrew, when a field-piece opened on them. On the 14th they retreated by Elmina and Fettue towards Doonguah, on the direct route to Ashantee. On the 19th they again showed within

five miles from Cape Coast, but on the 20th finally retreated. It afterwards appeared that disease and famine had produced mutiny and desertion in the Ashantee army, and on the 11th whole bands had turned homeward. The savage king in his fury had beheaded four out of six of the captains he had recaptured, and had chained the remaining two to heavy logs, yet the desertions still continued, and compelled him to march raging home.

The misery of this great Ashantee foray did not end here. The savage army had trodden under foot every plantation of Indian corn, yams, plantains, or bananas they had passed, and the Fantees narrowly escaped total destruction by famine. Beef rose to sixteen guineas a tierce at Cape Coast, and flour or bread could scarcely be obtained for gold.

Although the unwise division of forces, coupled with the hindrances of swamps and almost impassable woods, had given the Ashantees a momentary advantage, as we have seen, in 1824, in the year 1826 we took a bloody revenge. The Ashantees again threatening our settlements and making inroads on the Fantees, we gave them battle on a wooded plain, about twenty-four miles north-east of British Accra, or nearly four miles south of a village called Dodowah, which gave its name to the fight, the King of Ashantee having pitched his tent there. The attack was expected on the Monday, as that is a day considered fortunate by the Ashantees. About eight A.M. the enemy were in motion, and the king's drum was heard. Our line, which was rendered picturesque by the varied flags, arms, and dresses of British, Danish, Dutch, and Fantee, extended four miles from east to west. The Fantees and other native allies wore large sea-shells hung from their necks, before and behind, to distinguish them, and had strips of white calico tied to the barrels of their muskets. Our native auxiliaries were led on by the Queen of Akim and the Kings of Akimboo and Dinkara, who squabbled as to which was to specially attack the King of Ashantee. This Queen of Akim said, unconsciously parodying Queen Elizabeth:

"Osay has driven me from my country because he thinks me weak; but though I am a woman, I have the heart of a man."

It was at last settled that this black Boadicea should lead the extreme right and the two kings the extreme left. But as it fortunately, perhaps, happened, the

King of Ashantee, hearing there were white men in the centre of the enemy, chose that place in his own army as the point of special danger and special honour.

Our force was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Pardon. Several English and Danish merchants led on their own men. Our centre was formed of the Cape Coast volunteers and artificers, with the townspeople, and Bynia, the native chief, the Royal African Corps acting as a reserve. The attack commenced about half-past nine, when some of our allies, in their excitement, abusing and insulting our centre as cowards for not advancing, the word was given. We moved on about four hundred yards, and then opened a heavy and effective fire. The enemy sullenly retreated before us. No prisoners were taken, but all were killed as they fell, the English imploring our allies not to torture the fallen. "Suddenly," says an eye-witness, "a cry arose that the Ashantees were getting between the centre and the right, which, in fact, was the case, as one party from the Dutch town, who supported the right of the Cape Coast people, had given way, and the enemy had walked into their place. Besides this, the whole of the Danish natives, with their caboceer at their head, had fled early in the action, and 'the swallow-tailed banners of Denmark' were seen safely flying in the rear. The centre was now obliged to fall back, and relinquish every advantage, sustaining a galling fire in flank, and closely pressed with the mass of the enemy, who evidently were making a bold push to seize or bring down the whites. Captain Rogers, who was advancing with a small piece of artillery, would have been taken, had he not very promptly distinguished the real enemy. This was the crisis of the battle. Colonel Pardon advanced with the reserve and the rockets, a few of which, thrown among the Ashantees, occasioned the most dire terror and confusion. Another party of Ashantees had attacked the left of King Cheboo, of Dinkara, the Winneboks having fled at the first fire, and never stopped till they reached Accra. But a few rounds of grape thrown over the heads of our people restored the battle there also, Cheboo being already in advance with part of his people, driving back his opponents. On the right the battle was for a moment doubtful.

"The King of Akinboob drove all before him, and penetrating to the King of Ashantee's camp, he took the enemy in flank. The Danish natives, seeing the enemy driven

back by the rockets and grape, now advanced, and took possession of the plunder, which was immense, and deliberately walked off the field with it. They sent to request more ammunition, saying, they had only received twenty rounds each from their own government; and when upbraided with their conduct, said 'It was against their fetish to fire on a Monday.' It was justly said, at Accra afterwards, that one part of the army fought and the other got the spoil. When the death of any of his chiefs was reported to the King of Ashantee, he performed human sacrifices to their manes in the heat of battle. Among the sad trophies of the day is the head of Sir Charles M'Carthy, which was taken by the Aquanim chief. The whole of the Ashantee camp are taken, with their baggage and gold, and until it was dark parties were coming in with plunder from every quarter. The troops lay on their arms all night, as it was not known but that the king, with his surviving friends, might make an attack, in despair, on us, as he was seen in front, wandering over the scene of his fallen ambition. Through the night, at intervals, some of our chiefs struck their drums to some recitation, which was repeated along the line, and as it died away had a pleasing effect; but was generally succeeded by deep wailings from the glades in front of us, apparently from some unhappy Ashantee women looking for their friends among the fallen."

One of our friendly chiefs was slain in the act of dragging the King of Ashantee from his basket palanquin.

Our force in this battle amounted to eleven thousand three hundred and eighty muskets. The enemy were about ten thousand. Our army lost above eight hundred men, and some sixteen hundred were wounded, chiefly by knives. The Ashantees lost five thousand men, and many chiefs. The king himself was wounded. The next day our native allies returned to Accra groaning under their booty. "Had the Ashantees," says a local writer of the day, "delayed the battle for some time, our coalition, like all other holy alliances, would have fallen to pieces, being more discordant than the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's statue; left to themselves they would never have stood half an hour before the Ashantees." To show what resources and contrivances this singular people have, it may be mentioned that in the wallets of some of the Ashantees who fell, were found the hard scales of the bangolin, or ant-eater,

scorched with fire, for food, while for shot, among other things, they had cowrie shells loaded with lead.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER XLI. MY TRAGEDY.

I COULD not resist mentioning to Vickery that I had seen my relation, Sir George Nightingale, and discovered in him the defendant in the action brought by Messrs. Dicker Brothers. "Ay, ay," he said, going on with his writing, and declining to manifest the slightest surprise. By-and-bye he added, as he paused to take snuff, "It's always as well to make sure of the name of the party whom you serve with a writ. It's often necessary to make an affidavit on the subject. You'll remember that another time, Mr. Nightingale. There's nothing like picking up learning in a practical way." And thereupon he dismissed the subject. Whether, at the time he instructed me how to serve a writ upon Sir George, he was aware of the relationship existing between us, I failed to ascertain.

I had called again in Harley-street, but had been unable to see Sir George. I left a select number of my drawings for his inspection. Mole charged himself with their safe keeping, and promised to submit them to his superior at a convenient opportunity. Mole was hearty in his applause of my works, and congratulated me on my marked improvement since those past times when I had received at his hands my earliest lessons in art. It was agreed between us, however, that for the present, at any rate, it should not be revealed that he was Fane Mauleverer, my first master. He had conceived, I think, a curious tenderness for his reputation as Mr. Mauleverer, and desired that it should be based solely upon his theatrical career, and disconnected from his other occasional pursuits. The world in general was not to know that he had ever cut out black shades, or taught drawing, or been employed in the studio of a portrait-painter; still less, that he had ever figured as clown to a dancer on the "tight-jeff."

Tony had been much entertained with my account of Mole, and had expressed great desire to make his acquaintance. It was arranged, with this view, that Mole should be invited to an entertainment I was to give at Tony's chambers. These were preferred to my lodgings, because it

was thought possible the festivities of the occasion might be prolonged to a late hour, and might be of a boisterous character. There was a project that my tragedy should be forthcoming, and that elocutionary efforts connected therewith should be freely ventured upon. In Featherstone-buildings, as I have stated, the declamation of my blank verse had already been the occasion of some unpleasantness. My fellow-lodgers had complained, and my landlady had charged me with disappointing the expectations she had formed on the subject of my steadiness. As Tony explained, nothing of this kind was possible in regard to any proceedings that might take place in his chambers.

"It's a humble abode," he said, "small, confined, and the ceiling is uncommonly near one's head. But it has this great advantage: one can kick up a row in it if one wants to; and it seems to me that most people take chambers because they do want to kick up a row in them. No one hereabout has any right to complain of any occasional excess of noise. We've no landladies here; nor fellow-lodgers. I'm not a lodger at all; I'm the tenant of a distinct leasehold dwelling-place, of which I am absolute proprietor so long as I pay my rent. And I've done that hitherto pretty regularly. The benchers, or ancients, or whatever they're called, of the inn assemble every quarter to discharge their sole function—so far as I can ascertain—the receipt of rent. Every tenant paying his rent is entitled, in addition to a formal receipt, to a large slice of plum cake and a glass of brown sherry. I have taken the plum cake on several occasions; it has not agreed with me. The sherry I have never declined. But this is all apart from the main question: the right of kicking up a row. To that we possess an indefeasible title. My neighbour below plays the French horn, and distresses me very much. A tenant next door thinks he can sing; he can't, and I find his efforts very trying. But I feel that these are not matters with which I can in any way interfere. So that if I choose to have in my rooms a row taking the form of blank verse, I should like to see the man who will gainsay me."

It was hard, I thought, that my tragedy, or any declamation that might arise from it, should be unhesitatingly classed with that vulgar form of disturbance described as "kicking up a row;" but experience was against me. The complaints in Fea-

therstone-buildings in regard to my reading of my work had been couched precisely in that form of words.

I was pleased to see the interest Tony took in the proposed entertainment. He had of late denied himself recreation of almost every kind, partly because of the expense involved, and partly because of his desire to devote himself to the task of colouring the plates of the *Milliner's Magazine*. We had not visited the theatre for some time past. I did not care to go without him; and I did not wish to appear less thrifty than he was. I took up, therefore, with his economical humour. He rarely dined in Rupert-street now. He had discovered a ham and beef shop in Gray's-inn-lane, remarkable, as he alleged, for the moderation of its charges, and the excellence of its wares. He was eloquent on the subject of its large sixpenny plates of beef. But he grew thinner, I perceived.

It was Tony's proposition that Vickery should be invited to meet Mole. It did not, however, appear to me that this was a very promising arrangement.

"Depend upon it there's more in Vickery than you're prepared for," said Tony. "He wants stirring up, that's all; like tea, you know, when the sugar's at the bottom of the cup."

I remembered how highly Rachel had spoken of the old clerk. I felt that I had perhaps regarded him unjustly. He was invited accordingly to Tony's chambers. Somewhat to my surprise he consented to appear. He seemed even pleased, and his manner was irreproachably polite, if in rather a dry old-fashioned way. There was certainly a gleam as of pleasure in his watchful, cat-like eyes.

I made liberal provision for the entertainment. Bottles of wine and spirits were obtained from a neighbouring tavern. Supper was to be served at a given hour with the assistance of the same establishment, and was to be of a plentiful character. A bowl of punch was to be brewed. There was no lack of pipes, tobacco, and cigars; meanwhile, these articles were arranged in a decorative manner upon the mantelpiece, inasmuch that it looked like the window of a tobacconist's shop on a small scale, only wanting the figure of a Highlander taking snuff, or a negro smoking, to make the resemblance complete.

Tony had arranged his rooms to the best advantage, fixing lighted candles in unusual places, and decking the walls with his most striking drawings. With a line of flower-pots he contrived to mask the

fact that the window looked on to a gutter. He even procured laurel boughs, and with a view to greater picturesqueness of effect, introduced oranges here and there amongst the foliage. He surveyed these artifices with great satisfaction.

"Now, if the moon will only rise properly above the chimney-pots opposite we shall really have a most charming effect. Anybody might think we were in Verona. I'll pack away the easel in this corner, and then, with four chairs—we shall only want four—we shall just have room to circumnavigate the table. I'll take this chair myself, because I know one of its legs is in an unsettled state, and is liable to come off; it only wants a little humouring, and I understand its ways. Now I think all is really in readiness for the reception of our guests. There's a knock at the door!"

"Proud to know the young friend of my young friend," said Mole in his grandest manner as I introduced him to Tony, and they cordially shook hands. "Youth and friendship, and the fine arts, and—supper"—his eye had rested for a second upon the knives and plates, and his speech had irresistibly been influenced by their significance—"has life greater gifts to bestow? I'm a trifle winded—if I may employ the term—by the number of your stairs. An asthma troubles me at times, and my voice fails me. It was the same, you may have heard, with Kemble."

Indeed, Mole was very hoarse. His tones struggled for issue and escape, as from thick bandages of blankets. He was clean shaven and wore a protuberant shirt-frill, in honour of the occasion: his thin hair being neatly arranged in lines across his pate so that it looked something like a sheet of ruled paper, or a page from a copy-book.

"Yes, many flights of stairs, but as in the case of mountain-tops, the pains of ascent are repaid by the prospect obtained. An attic, a really charming attic. I am partial to attics. I have made my home in them, I may say, nearly all my life. I adore an attic. I can breathe in an attic." He was breathing in rather a troubled way at the moment, however. "I find space to move and to turn round in." This was saying a good deal for Tony's apartment; for when Mole waved his arms in his redundant, gesticulatory way, he could almost touch the wall on either side. "There is freedom in the very atmosphere. Yes, seek tyranny and despotism in gilded halls and marble palaces; but for Liberty, you will find her ever at home, happy and glorious in the humility of her garret!"

The delivery of this sentiment seemed to afford him great gratification. He shook hands with us both again. "And here, if I mistake not," he continued, pointing to the pictures on the walls, "are achievements of promise, at any rate. The germs of greatness, it may be. Why not? Yes, I observe dexterity of design, not always unerring, perhaps, yet of worth, and a sense of colour, so far as I may judge by this candlelight, immature, but really powerful."

Another knock. Vickery, of course. Tony hastened to admit him.

"He wants work," I said to Mole. "I wish much to get him work. Does he paint well enough, do you think, to help in Sir George's studio?"

"It was one of my flourishes," whispered Mole, huskily. "To tell the honest truth, I haven't really looked at his work. But it's my way always to entertain my audience; with the true text if possible; if not—without. How do you do, sir? I am gratified to meet you again?"

This was to Vickery, who, wearing a prodigiously stiff black satin stock, but not otherwise altered in appearance, now entered the room, accompanied by Tony.

"We have met——" said Vickery, eyeing his interlocutor doubtfully.

"At Mr. Monck's office. You may remember, I discharged an account there, one day. I don't do such things so often, that I can forget them. And it was not a claim upon myself, I may add. In such case the result might have been different. It was upon Sir George Nightingale—the relative, as it proved, of my young friend here. You recollect?"

"Precisely. But—we're out of office hours now." And Vickery proffered his tin snuff-box with a grin upon his face of a not disagreeably subacid kind.

"Capital face and figure for Marrall or Wormwood," Mole whispered to me. "Strange," he mused, "that now I've quitted the stage, I am constantly struck with the notion that there's a good deal yet to be done in the way of 'making up.' The public hasn't found it out, but both painters and players might, with advantage, study more than they do from the living model. Your friend's capital. What a hit he'd make in village lawyers! With a dab of rouge here and there, and a trifle of yellow ochre, I could go on for him, and secure a round on my entrance. I could have done it at one time with my own hair, brushed forward and touched with powder; but that's all over now."

To do Vickery justice, he certainly strove

to make himself agreeable, and fairly succeeded. He seemed to put from him much of his customary demeanour as Mr. Monck's managing clerk, and to assume an air of pleasantness that, if somewhat staid and stiff, was yet most commendable. A certain legal flavour pertained to his conversation, as though his powers of speech had been long buried amongst parchments, and had caught something of their dry and musty nature. He was politely deferential in manner, and his studied "Mr. Nightingale" contrasted with the free "my dear Duke" of my earlier friend Mole. Tony he invariably addressed as "Sir," in recognition, possibly, of his being the nephew of Mr. Monck. He really proved a likeable elderly gentleman. He looked about him now and then in his wonted cautious and scrutinising way; but he made himself at home in Tony's room, seemed thoroughly at ease, and most willing to play his part in the entertainments of the evening. He sat rubbing his knees, giving utterance to some dry speech lightly tinged with drollery; he took snuff liberally, and, as the night advanced, he smoked a pipe, and looked very comfortable indeed. As I noted his grave wary face, and the little jets of smoke slowly permitted to issue from his lips, as though it was of value, in the nature of a fund in court, and not to be expended without much deliberation and pause, it occurred to me that if ever a judge on the bench indulged in a pipe, he must have looked the while much as did Vickery thus occupied.

Moreover, he disclosed a curious interest in the stage. This took us all by surprise, and greatly delighted Tony. It really seemed that just as some people rejoice in sly dram-drinking, so Vickery was addicted to furtive playgoing.

"Why, I never saw you at the theatre, Vickery," said Tony.

"I've seen you there, and Mr. Nightingale also. I usually sit in the two-shilling gallery. But I don't go so often as I did. The stage is not now what I can remember it. The drama is not what it was."

"I quite agree with you, sir. Will you permit me the pleasure of shaking hands with you again?" said Mole, coming forward. He had been sitting apart, turning over the leaves of my manuscript tragedy.

"Mrs. Siddons! ah! she was a woman!" cried Vickery, with strange effusiveness.

"Say a divinity, rather!"

"Precisely," said Vickery.

CHAPTER XLII. THE DAUGHTER OF THE DOGE.

"I FIND that our young friend here has been writing a tragedy," observed Mole.

"In blank verse. One of the finest works in the language, I venture to state," said Tony, stoutly.

"Indeed! I had no idea of anything of the kind. Permit me to congratulate you, Mr. Nightingale." And Vickery bowed to me, with difficulty, for his stock was very stiff. "I should much like to hear it read; or select passages from it," he added, warily.

In justice to myself I must say that I would willingly have kept my tragedy in the background; that I did not at all desire its production. We were getting on capitally without it. The entertainment was proceeding most successfully. An unexpected fraternisation on the subject of the theatre had arisen between my two guests, who had not, in the first instance, promised any cordiality of union. And the cue, so to speak, for the entrance of my play was certainly unfortunate. Both Mole and Vickery were agreed as to the fallen state of the modern stage. Now they could hardly look for its uplifting at my hands. Mole had known me in a schoolboy's round jacket, Vickery knew me as an article clerk in Mr. Monck's office. To neither was I a person of much consequence.

Still, it was a friendly audience. We were all on good terms with each other, and with ourselves. The punch (compounded by Mole) had freely circulated, and had won hearty approval. The supper (over which Mole presided) had been unexceptionable: the lobster salad, I remember (Mole had dressed it), obtaining especial applause. I may say that Mole had greatly assisted me in enacting the character of host; indeed, like a too powerful ally, he almost overcame and effaced my efforts altogether. I was but a young performer, and, as he explained to me, he was accustomed to play "leading parts" in situations of the kind. The excessive zeal of his aid in no way dissatisfied me, however. I felt, indeed, grateful to him for his exertions in furtherance of the evening's pleasures. Both Tony and I were conscious, I think, of our juvenility as hosts in the presence of Mole and Vickery. Still, we did all we could in the way of producing bottles, filling glasses, and handing pipe-lights. Nevertheless, Mole seemed to be the absolute manager, and wore all the airs of giver of the feast.

My manuscript, neatly covered with

brown paper, was laid upon the table. But it was soon made clear to me that Mole, and not the author, was to be the interpreter of the work.

"Leave it to me, my dear Duke," he said. "I'm accustomed to this sort of thing. I think I can give it better effect. Authors are invariably bad readers. I never knew an exception."

I consented. Not very reluctantly, for I felt nervous and diffident, and distrustful of my elocutionary powers. And it was true, no doubt, that authors were, as a rule, indifferent readers of their own works. I had forgotten, at the moment, Mole's asthmatic condition. He was terribly husky, and the supper he had consumed seemed to oppress and veil his tones more than ever.

"Kemble had a 'foggy throat,' you remember," he said to me, apologetically; "it did not prevent his doing great things, however." He cleared his voice—so far as it could be cleared—which, indeed, was not very far.

He had sat down and arranged two candles in front of him, after the manner of a public lecturer. A glass of hot punch, however, was substituted for the conventional tumbler of cold water. He opened the manuscript, smoothing it with his hands very deliberately, and carefully curling the corners of the leaves so that he might turn them over promptly. He stretched out his arms, until I plainly heard sundry stitches in his coat give way; he was anxious to have sufficient room and freedom for whatever gesticulation might be necessary to give effect to his reading. He was evidently desirous to impress and gratify his audience, though more I think on his own account than on mine. I noticed that he particularly addressed himself to Vickery. As the author, I was out of court, so to say; Tony was a young man from whom critical opinion was hardly to be expected; moreover, he was clearly a fast friend of the writer's, a partisan bound to applaud under any circumstances. But Vickery could be considered in the light of an unprejudiced spectator; an experienced playgoer who had seen Mrs. Siddons, and who entertained sound opinions as to the fallen state of the stage.

"Our young friend's work," began Mole, turning to Vickery, "is entitled the Daughter of the Doge. It is a poetic tragedy in five acts of very considerable length. I may say at once, before I read a line of it, that it will want cutting—a good deal of

cutting indeed, to suit it for representation. And in any case I much fear that the public taste is at present somewhat opposed to productions of this class."

"I fear so too," said Vickery. "People, now-a-days, only care for such things as *Timour the Tartar*. Is it at all in the style of *Timour the Tartar*, Mr. Nightingale?"

"Not in the least." I felt hurt at the question.

"You could introduce real horses, perhaps?" suggested Mole. "Real horses would greatly assist the play."

"The scene is laid in Venice you will find," I explained.

"I see; but I'm not sure that the audience would object to real horses on that account. Venice? Then you might certainly bring on real water. I think the house would quite expect real water, and feel disappointed if none was forthcoming."

"The best place for real water is Sadler's Wells. They've the New River close at hand, you know," said Vickery. "If you really thought of sending the play to the Wells, Mr. Nightingale, I've some little acquaintance with the manager, and I might possibly be able to help you in that quarter."

"Vickery lives at Islington, somewhere near the theatre," Tony whispered to me.

I said that I was quite satisfied that the play was unsuited to Sadler's Wells. Already I felt that enough real cold water had been thrown upon the Daughter of the Doge.

The reading then began. Mole certainly took pains; he was deliberate and emphatic, but he often met with difficulties in the manuscript, and made random guesses at the words of the text, occasionally with ludicrous results. Moreover, his command over his voice was very uncertain. The husky cooing tone he adopted for the heroine, Bianca, was very disagreeable to me; and the ventral bass he employed for the villain Ludovico, had quite a burlesque air about it. He was altogether unconscious of this, however; he proceeded assiduously with much movement of his arms and varied play of his eyebrows. Now and then his hand descended upon the table with a heavy thump that imperilled all the glasses in the room; his gasps were very forcible, and his sudden starts ended in his breaking the back of his chair. Still, I was dissatisfied with his reading. He was, I thought, far too pompous and ponderous, too "stagey"

in fact. He understood the delivery of blank verse, but he had a staccato, syllabic style of utterance that seemed to me distressingly artificial. It was as though he were addressing himself to a vast auditory, and was determined that all should hear and comprehend him, even to the last man cracking nuts on the back bench of the gallery. Somehow I felt that all the poetry and tenderness with which I had laboured to invest my verse had been beaten out of it by Mole's strained and prodigious method of dealing with it. I thought I could really have done more justice to the work if I had read it myself. I was acquainted with its strong points.

Mole seemed striving to give prominence to every line. I began to understand how much authors must inevitably suffer at the hands of actors—even the most zealous and anxious to content their dramatist. And I perceived, too, that the performance fully justified the opinion pronounced on a previous occasion in Featherstone-buildings. We were decidedly chargeable with "kicking up a row."

The reading was, to my thinking, a failure altogether; and yet it had its moments of triumph. Tony was good enough to applaud at every possible opportunity, and even old Vickery now and then permitted himself to murmur approval. At the close of every act Mole paused for refreshment, to dab his moist forehead, and to drain his glass. His exertions had undoubtedly been arduous. His face was streaming by the time he had arrived at the third act. He had found it necessary to remove his cravat and shirt-collar; he had unbuttoned his waistcoat at an early period of the evening; the last act he read in his shirt-sleeves, and without his boots. Indeed, if the tragedy had been of any greater length, he would, I believe, have divested himself of every article of clothing.

"I do like that poisoning scene in the third act," said Tony.

"Yes, it's effective," said Mole. "But you know we've had that business of changing the goblets on the stage before."

Vickery remembered its being done, in a play at the Haymarket, twenty years back.

I protested, what was perfectly true at the time, that I was not acquainted with any work in which such an incident had occurred.

Vickery, I think, but I could not be sure, muttered a quotation from Sheridan.

"And then that description of Bianca strikes me as exquisite," said Tony.

"Yes, it's pretty," said Mole. "I think it would tell with the pit."

Tony began a quotation, but Mole would not permit him to finish it. He seemed determined that no one should recite but himself.

"Look where she stands, lit by the setting sun!
The rays seem o'er her golden head to dance,
As though they'd found a playground that they loved.
Whilst from her lambent eyes what gleams outshine!
Sweet summer lightning on an azure sky,
Flashes to love, not fear!"

"And further on," said Tony, "when Lorenzo relates how Bianca won his love."

Mole continued:

"Not here those gaudy gifts, passion's excuse,
Those charms particular which men can count
Upon their fingers, reckon off by heart,
And know as coins which bought of them their love.
She strikes not, yet she captures; for she weaves
Round the heartstrings, oh such a tondril net
Of fond endearments, gentlest kindnesses,
But cobweb threads at first, but which, in time,
Expand to cable's strength! Like some soft bird,
On tree she builds a house within the breast,
And closely nestling there, all unsuspect,
Makes it her home for aye."

But the most admired passage was in the speech of the dying Doge in the last act. Mole certainly spared no effort to give due effect to the scene in which this occurred. He even quitted his chair, stretched himself upon the floor, and rolled to and fro in great apparent agony, still keeping fast hold of my manuscript the while.

"If I were sure of the words," he said, "I feel that I could do a great deal with the dying Doge."

His writhings and contortions of face and limb were extreme. No doubt we were too near to them. He was still aiming at the edification and the applause of the man on the back bench of the gallery. I must say that he seemed to me to be grimacing extravagantly. In broken spasmodic accents he moaned:

"Here let me rest—where the sad solemn stars
Gleam down so wanly on me, Bianca!
Give me thine hand—wreath round me thy white arms.
Let my last knowledge be that thou art near,
My parting words and glances all be thine.
I'd much to say—but my mind wanders far
From earth. How dark it grows! Forgive me, child.
The day is gone; there's twilight on my soul!
As blind men walk I grope my way to death.
My life is ebbing from me, as the land
Fades from the vision of a drifting ship
Launched on a black and unknown sea!"

And at last he fell back heavily, closing his eyes, and dropping his jaw in a very awful manner. Indeed, he had so far surrendered himself to the cunning of the scene, that it was with some difficulty he could be persuaded that he still lived. Upon Tony's proffering him a glass of punch he revived, however, and quaffed it in the attitude of the dying gladiator. For

some time his voice was reduced to a mere whisper, his exertions had been so severe.

"I can see," he said, as he rose from the floor, "that your play contains a good deal of what we call 'fat' for a heavy tragedian. But it drags terribly in places. I don't see that your first act is wanted at all. The Doge doesn't come on, and Bianca is only talked about. Indeed, she's too much talked about all through. She really does very little. Ludovico, the villain, has got some good lines to deliver, and his scene with the bravos should be effective. I could do something with Ludovico. There's a touch of Mephistopheles about him that I rather like. But, really, Lorenzo is little better than a walking gentleman: a nice pair of legs in tights—there's nothing more needed for the part. The first and second senators are simply bores, and I should omit all that about the Adriatic. It's poetical, but the audience never care for mere poetry, they prefer to be without it. After all, you know they come to the theatre to see and not to hear."

"If I may say so," remarked Vickery, "I think the work is rather calculated for perusal than performance."

I knew that he would utter some terribly cut and dried opinion of that kind. There are always people willing to give you the very thing you don't want. My tragedy was expressly devised for representation. To praise it on other grounds was, in truth, to censure it.

"I think it beautiful, simply beautiful," said Tony. "It's the only word I can employ to describe it. I congratulate you heartily, my dear Duke."

"Pray accept my congratulations also, Mr. Nightingale." Vickery allowed himself to be affected by Tony's ardour. "A most promising work, I'm sure; and containing much eloquent and poetic matter."

"And we're really greatly indebted to Mr. Mole for the admirable reading of the play. It was quite an intellectual treat of a high order—that's my view of it. Thank you, Mr. Mole." And Tony helped him on with his coat.

I, too, hastened to thank Mole for his labours. They had not altogether contented me, but they merited recognition.

Mole accepted our thanks. He was thoroughly pleased with himself; but applause was agreeable to him. He sat apart for a little while to grow cool, to recover his breath and his voice—so far as that was possible.

"It reminds me of old times," he whis-

pered to me. "I feel as though I'd been playing Richard. The finest character in the whole range of the drama for promoting perspiration. I used to do it upon barley-water. You haven't such a thing here, perhaps. I'll make beer do as well."

Gradually he resumed his clothes and his chair at the table. Another bowl of punch was mixed. The conversation became general, and of a more convivial tone. My work was occasionally referred to, but it had ceased to be a leading topic. We entered upon a course of speech-making. I proposed the health of Mole. He replied in moving, in husky terms, referring affectionately to our long and firm friendship, and predicting for me a career of great distinction, though he indicated its direction but vaguely. The healths of Tony and Vickery were afterwards duly drunk. Subsequently I think we went through the list of toasts usually proposed at public banquets. Much was said, chiefly by Mole, on the subjects of "The Drama," coupling with it the name of our host; "The Fine Arts," with which Tony was connected; and "Literature," which was somehow made to embrace Law, and thus to involve Vickery. Certain loyal toasts were acknowledged by Mole, probably on the score of his being assistant to the king's serjeant-painter, and in such wise brought into obscure association with the crown. He could have had no better or more explicable reason for his returning thanks for "The Church," except that he had once, I remembered, been desirous of playing the part of a bishop; but he executed that self-imposed task with much appropriate gravity and dignity.

There was the pale light of coming day in the sky when Vickery volunteered the song of Post Meridian, and rendered that composition with unexpected skill, especially in regard to its more florid passages. Mole, thereupon, attempted the ballad of Black Eyed Susan with but indifferent success—he had forgotten the words, and his voice could not compass the music. It was soon after Vickery had expressed his regret that he had omitted to bring his flute with him—I was quite unaware that he ever performed upon that instrument, and I did not, I own, deplore its absence—that our little party separated.

Mole's legs seemed to fail him somewhat as he went down the stairs, but with Vickery's help he accomplished the descent in safety. Their voices sounded noisily in the silent quadrangle of the inn. As I looked from the window I could see them standing in the grey morning twilight with a somewhat disreputable air of revelry about them. They were very jocose together. Surely they were not laughing over my tragedy? It could not be.

Mole, in his effusive way, was promising Vickery orders for any London theatre he might elect to visit. He was expressing the pleasure he had experienced in meeting with Vickery—he hoped they might come together on many subsequent occasions. He had been delighted with Mr.—he forgot the name for a moment—yes—of course—thank you—Vickery—Mr. Vickery's intellectual conversation—with his very sound sentiments regarding the present condition of the stage. Then there was more jesting between them, and Vickery laughed—laughed out more boisterously than I could have conceived possible.

They were rousing the night porter of the inn, asleep in his lodge. They had some difficulty, apparently. They were crowing like cocks! Vickery's imitation was much the better of the two. Then came the noise of the porter unlocking the wicket door; its slamming behind them; the pattering of their steps on the pavement without; and all was still.

"It's been capital fun altogether," said Tony, leaning back languidly in his chair. "I never enjoyed anything so much in my life. But—it's the heat—the smoke—the excitement, I suppose: I never felt so tired before."

His face was flushed, and his eyes were bright; yet he looked thoroughly jaded, and his hand, I noticed, as I parted from him, was tremulous and burning hot.

How well I remember that evening! I date from it my abandonment of my hopes as a dramatist. I locked up my tragedy in my desk and did not look at it, scarce thought of it, again, for many years; and—a far more important matter—I also date from it my first perception of the gravely declining health of my friend Tony. The poor boy was really very ill.

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